

Soldiers *Online*

SSG Heekin Raleigh



On duty in Kosovo, members of Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, enjoy a box of goodies they received through the AdoptaPlatoon program.

Kingston, N.H.

Overseas Holiday Mail Programs

TWO organizations have set up programs to send holiday mail, beginning Dec. 1, to soldiers serving overseas away from their families.

AdoptaPlatoon would like to reach out to as many deployed soldiers as possible this holiday season by sending a box of candy canes, along with a festive holiday greeting card, to one or more of the addresses available at its website, www.adoptaplatoon.org.

For soldiers stationed in southwest Asia, such as Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, only non-religious holiday cards can be sent. Snacks containing pork products are also prohibited.

The U.S. Postal Service has all the necessary customs forms that must accompany packages.

Call (800) 222-1811 for free priority mailboxes, shipping tape and mailing labels. Please be sure to put "AdoptaPlatoon" in your return address, for security reasons.

For more information go to the organization's programs website.

Another option is to send mail via Operation USA Mail Support, a program established by three Southern California businessmen.

Michael and David Fleming, and Paul Kramer, have recruited members of the International Association of the Leisure and Entertainment Industry, the Roller Skating Rink Association and the Restaurant Association to hold letter-writing campaigns at their businesses. The businesses then mail the letters — at their own expense — to U.S. troops deployed overseas. — *AdoptaPlatoon, Operation USA Mail Support*

Washington, D.C.

QDR Emphasizes Change

THE size of the U.S. military will remain about the same, but portions will be reconfigured to counter asymmetrical threats, according to the Quadrennial Defense Review released to Congress Sept. 30.

The report, available at www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr2001.pdf, is a 65-page blueprint for where the U.S. military needs to go to confront 21st-century threats.

The report says the military's strategy for dealing with threats will be aimed more at countering threats than targeting specific countries or groups.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has said that during the Cold War America knew what threats it faced. That's not the case today, however. The nation now needs the capabilities to combat a broad range of

threats from the conventional to the asymmetrical, he said.

Even before Sept. 11, officials said, the QDR had concluded that terrorism, chemical and biological weapons, cyber attacks and missile threats would transform the strategic landscape.

"Adversaries are acquiring such systems, and they've designed those systems and the acquisition of those systems to circumvent our conventional military capabilities," the report said.

The report emphasizes that the United States should antici-

Personnel News

Army Not Yet Invoking "Stop-Loss"

AT press time, the Army had not decided to enact "stop-loss" authority to keep soldiers from leaving active duty, despite reports to the contrary.

"We do not have a stop-loss requirement at this time," said Reginald J. Brown, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs.

"There are many rumors out there about stop-loss," Brown said. "At this point in time, however, we don't see a need for it."

On Sept. 19 Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld delegated stop-loss authority to the military department heads.

"We're studying the feasibility of stop-loss as a possibility for the future," Brown said. "The Army is currently at full strength, and calling in the National Guard and Army Reserve for support has precluded the need to implement stop-loss. Of course, things would change if a major mobilization was imminent."

If the Army does opt to implement stop-loss, DOD officials said, soldiers would be informed through command channels and via internal information sources.

Stop-loss allows the defense secretary, through a presidential executive order, to involuntarily extend soldiers' active-duty service requirements. Soldiers would not be allowed to retire or leave the service at the end of their initial obligatory periods of enlistment.

Exceptions to the stop-loss policy allow the involuntary discharge of soldiers for criminal acts, under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or for medical reasons.

DOD last invoked stop-loss during the Gulf War. — *Army News Service*

pate and be prepared to deal with asymmetrical threats to the nation, U.S. allies and U.S. troops deployed abroad.

The QDR also recommends changing the U.S. military's force structure to allow it to fight and win two near-simultaneous major regional contingencies — while still being able to conduct small-scale contingencies.

Assignment locations will also change. The QDR reaffirms America's commitment to Europe, but recommends shift-

ing troops, as needed, to other areas.

The report did not list weapon systems or platforms that should be scrapped, but did make recommendations about how the services should manage their forces.

Other high-priority "transformational" initiatives outlined in the report include protecting the U.S. base of operations on tactical, operational and strategic levels; information operations; power-projection capabilities; space operations; and

leveraging information technology. — *American Forces Information Service*

Europe

The Euro Debuts on New Year's Day

THE euro will become the circulation currency in 12 European countries beginning Jan. 1, 2002.

Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain will replace their national currencies with the euro.

Since Jan. 1, 1999, all of the heritage currencies have been mere denominations of the Euro — any transaction not involving cash probably is transacted in Euros.

During the transition, or dual circulation period, customers may get change in euros even if they pay in the local currency.

Soldiers, U.S. civilian employees and their families can convert national currency at any military community bank or defense credit union during the free exchange period from Jan. 1 through Feb. 28, 2002. Feb. 28 will also be the last day to exchange local notes and coins

for euros at community bank offices in Germany and the Netherlands.

At these military banking institutions, all over-the-counter local bill payments in Germany and the Netherlands will be processed in euros beginning Dec. 14.

End-of-month German mark or Dutch guilder standing payment orders will be converted at the fixed rate and paid in euros by the end of this month. All payments thereafter will be paid in euros. The amounts agreed upon in the original contract will simply be converted to euros for free without redoing the payment order.

Finance offices at deployed sites will provide currency conversion to euros for all deployed personnel.

The official abbreviation for the euro is "EUR." The official symbol for the euro looks like a capital C with two clearly marked horizontal parallel lines.

There are eight euro coins: 1 and 2 euros, plus 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 centime pieces. There are notes in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros.

For more information, go to the Bank of Finland's English website at www.bof.fi/env/rhinden.htm. — *266th Finance Company*



Euro coins and notes become the standard currency in 12 European nations beginning on Jan. 1.

Allowances Update

Use-Or-Lose Leave Extended

SOLDIERS may carry up to 80 days worth of leave into the new fiscal year because of the increased military tempo created by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Defense Department officials said.

Normally, service members may only carry over 60 days of leave from year to year.

Unless special circumstances exist, leave in excess of 60 days is usually lost at the end of the fiscal year.

The Department of Defense directed the services to allow the special leave accrual of up to 80 days in a memorandum dated Sept. 18.

"A lot of military leaves were canceled immediately following the attacks due to a significant need to increase force protection at all Army installations," said LTC Nobel Lugo, a finance action officer with the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. "This special leave accrual authority will allow those soldiers to take up to an additional 20 days excess leave they've earned in FY 2001 and use it by the end of FY 2004."

The reason an additional 20 days was selected, rather than another number, is that 20 days is all the leave that someone could have scheduled between the day of the attacks and the end of FY 2001 — Sept. 11-30, Lugo said.

Neither the Office of Personnel Management nor the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs has implemented a blanket authorization for Department of the Army civilians to carry over any excess annual leave into 2002 above the normal caps. However, existing OPM guidance on restoration of annual leave provides some opportunities to do so based upon exigency of public business or sickness. That guidance can be found on the OPM website at www.opm.gov/oca/leave/html/restore.htm. — *ARNEWS*

SPC Edgar Gonzalez



MDW commander MG James T. Jackson receives the folded flag from members of the 3rd U.S. Infantry, The Old Guard.

Washington

Pentagon Flag Preserved

THE huge American flag that hung to the right of the damaged area of the Pentagon was lowered Oct. 11 and folded with full military honors.

Soldiers of Company A, 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), lowered the colors and folded them during a ceremony at the helipad just in front of where a hijacked airliner hit the Pentagon Sept. 11.

The flag belonged to the U.S. Army Band at nearby Fort Myer, Va. A garrison flag, it's the largest authorized for military use.

Band members sent the flag to the Pentagon after the attack. During President George W. Bush's visit to the site, 3rd Inf. soldiers and firefighters draped it over the side of the building. Each night during the search-and-recovery operations the flag was illuminated by flood lights. Today, it is soot-stained and torn in one spot.

"This flag will never be flown again," said MG Jim Jackson, commander of the Military Dis-

trict of Washington. Jackson is expected to present the flag to Army leaders in the near future. — AFIS

Alexandria, Va.

AFAP Conference Rescheduled

THE 2001 Army Family Action Plan conference, originally planned for Oct. 29 to Nov. 2, has been rescheduled for March 11 to 15.

More than 100 representatives from major Army commands and installations are expected to gather at the conference, said Sandra Vlcek, chief, AFAP program.

The semi-annual AFAP General Officer Steering Committee meeting will also be held during the March conference, Vlcek said, though an exact date for the meeting had not been decided by press time.

The AFAP is a catalyst for transforming policies and programs to better serve soldiers and families, said officials of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

They said it allows all members of the Army community —

active-duty, reserve-component, retirees, civilians and family members — to provide input about every facet of Army life and make recommend improvements.

More information about the AFAP, and the status of more than 400 issues, is available online at www.armymwr.com, under "Family Programs." — CFSC PAO

Washington

Reserve Component to Guard Homeland

AS the nation's ongoing campaign to end terrorism moved forward in October with air and special-operations forces attacks in Afghanistan, reserve component soldiers patrolled airports and guarded key installations throughout the United States.

By press time, about 10,000 National Guard and Reserve soldiers had been activated to support "Operation Noble Eagle," America's homeland-

defense and civil-support effort, officials said. President George W. Bush authorized the call-up of 50,000 Reservists and National Guard members, but service chiefs initially required only 35,000.

Along with the call-up of troops, the Defense Department announced a mortgage-rate cap under the 1940s Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a letter to all Federal Housing Administration-approved lenders advising them of their obligations under the act, said HUD Secretary Mel Martinez.

The act requires that all lenders reduce interest rates on mortgages to no more than 6 percent for all soldiers called to active duty. The lenders are also prohibited from foreclosing against military personnel during and immediately after their tours of active duty.

Active-duty personnel may also qualify for the interest-rate

Deployment News

White to Head DOD Homeland Security

SECRETARY of the Army Thomas E. White was named as the Department of Defense's executive agent for homeland security matters by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

"In the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, homeland security has emerged as a paramount national priority," White said. "As the Department of Defense executive agent for homeland security, I look forward to working closely with Gov. Tom Ridge as he leads this vital effort."

White will be responsible for managing DOD's support for homeland defense initiatives, and for ensuring the best use is made of the personnel and equipment of both the active and reserve components.

"Since the earliest days of our nation, the Army — both active and reserve — has engaged in homeland security," White said. "So the Army brings enormous experience, talent and capabilities to the effort." — DOD News

cap if they incurred their mortgage debt before going on active duty, Martinez said.

HUD officials also encouraged commercial mortgage lenders to postpone the collection of principal payments from all service members during their tours of duty.

The relief act also protects

military renters by ensuring that they cannot be evicted from their property, and by allowing them to terminate leases without repercussion.

For more information, call HUD's toll-free number, (888) 297-8685.

Reserve-component soldiers have employment rights

under the Uniformed Service Employment and Re-employment Rights Act, including continuation of health and retirement benefits. The entire document is available online at www.osc.gov/userra.htm. — ARNEWS

Washington

Call-Up "Tool Kit" Available

THE Guard and Reserve Family Readiness Programs Toolkit is an important asset now available to families of service members being called to active duty or deploying.

The item is available as a printed product and on the Internet at www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit.

"The tools — including a family financial-management workbook — could be a great help to soldiers deploying as a result of President Bush's Sept. 14 order calling to active duty some 50,000 members of the reserve component," said COL James L. Scott II, director of individual and family support policy in DOD's Office of Re-

serve Affairs.

The tool kit is a standardized predeployment and mobilization handbook. It is an attempt to standardize information between services and the reserve component, so they can all use the same language when talking about deployment preparations, Scott said.

The kit grew out of the Family Strategic Readiness Plan, which ensures family support systems adequately serve reserve-component families.

With the tool kit is another helpful website, the "Guard and Reserve Family Readiness Schedule of Events," at www.defenselink.mil/ra/calendar. The calendar lists family readiness training sites for the services. Those interested in such training can search the calendar for nearby training opportunities.

Finally, the site also has a "Guide to Reserve Family Member Benefits." The booklet explains available military benefits, including medical and dental benefits, commissary and exchange privileges, military pay and allowances and re-employment rights. — AFIS

More Personnel News

Terrorist Attacks Prompt Danger Pay

DOD announced in September the award of hostile-fire, imminent-danger pay for service members who were in the New York World Trade Center or Pentagon during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on those sites.

In an Oct. 8 memo, DOD suspended a requirement to track the number of days a soldier is deployed to determine eligibility for high-deployment per diem. Therefore, an additional payment of \$100 per diem for soldiers who might have been entitled to extra money was also suspended.

Most soldiers eligible for the special hostile-fire pay will receive a one-time payment of \$150. Those hospitalized for injuries suffered during the attack may get up to three months of hostile-fire pay, a total of \$450, depending on how long they remain hospitalized.

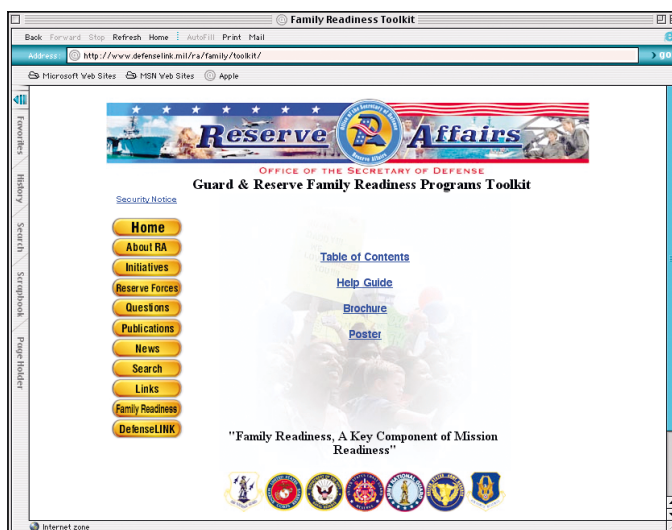
Specific instructions on the special pay have not been announced, although a memorandum will be required from the first colonel or civilian equivalent in the soldier's chain of command to verify that the soldier was in the Pentagon or World Trade Center at the time of the attacks, said LTC Nobel Lugo, a finance action officer with the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

The hostile-fire pay will not be awarded to military emergency responders or other soldiers who arrived on the scene following the attacks, Lugo said.

At press time, Congress was reviewing legislation that would award hostile fire pay to DOD civilians who were at the two sites when the hijacked jets slammed into the buildings.

High-deployment pay became law under the fiscal year 2001 National Defense Authorization Act. All services implemented personnel tempo management systems to track individual deployment days on Oct. 1, 2000. To qualify for the high-deployment pay, service members had to be deployed more than 401 days in a 730-day period. Eligibility for the payment would have begun in mid-November.

The PERSTEMPO clock and requirement to pay the \$100 high-deployment per diem were suspended under Section 991(d) of Title 10 of the U.S. Code, due to the national emergency President George W. Bush declared following the terrorist attacks, Lugo said. — ARNEWS



The Family Readiness Programs toolkit is available online at www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/.